

# Movie Makers

March-April, 1999

Volume 9 No. 2

The American Motion Picture Society

## From the President

**T**He last time I spoke to Howard Lewis was about three years ago. He asked if I would be the vice president of the American Motion Picture Society the following year. The job would be mostly just a figure head. Sure! Why not! George Cushman had just died, but Howard had the whole shu-bang running smoothly. After a year of twiddling my thumbs, doing nothing in the job, I suddenly realized that the VP became the president the next year. Not to worry. Howard still had everything under control. Howard became ill, and after several bouts with illness, he too passed along to that big soundstage in the sky. AMPS stalled.

Roger Garretson then picked up the gauntlet as Secretary/Treasurer, taking Howard's place. Matt Jenkins took over editorship of the AMPS Movie Makers publication and I tagged along for the ride as President. It was Roger's feeling that we should not let AMPS and the American International Film and Video Festival be written off as "finis." After all the Festival has survived for 68 years and is the longest running film festival in the United States. This struck a responsive cord in my heart since my own construction company



*AMPS hosts the longest running film/video festival in the United States.*

was in the throes of death, having been established by my father in 1938. I hate to see any organization die after that many years of providing service and/or lively hood for so many people for such a long time. While AMPS is not an organization in the same sense as the construction company, it has been a place where "wannabe" movie moguls could send their productions to be aired and hopefully be enjoyed and appreciated by others who have similar interests.

AMPS is not out of the woods yet. But it is still alive for now. It is still dedicated to the interests of the serious (and not so serious) motion

Picture makers. However, the organization cannot exist without members. AMPS is you. It is me. It takes each one of us to make up the Society. Without the collective "us" AMPS will die. We are AMPS. Do we want it to pass on with George and Howard or do we want to leave it for others to have a place to express and show their talents?

I propose we, number 1, make sure our own membership is renewed. Number 2, recruit your movie maker friends, entice them with the GREAT prizes the Festival gives to winners. Number 3, let us know if you would like to be a board member. Remember the pay and benefits are great. Yachts, hula girls, vacations, etc. That last sentence has nothing to do with pay. Those are things you can use to make your movies around. Your Pay? Appreciation!!! I once worked for a franchise company for ten years. To this day I feel cheated because the boss did not give me a 10 year appreciation pin as he had given to others. He could not admit it was just an oversight on his part. Had he done so, perhaps I would have worked for him forever. I think I

*(President, continued on page 2.)*

### inside...

When in Doubt, Leave it Out  
It's a Ball Game  
It Takes a 2-by-4  
What is Art?

page 3  
page 4  
page 4  
Page 4

Festival Listing:  
Page 6

Ten Tips for Beginning Videographers (Part 2) will appear in our next issue

## Movie Makers

Dedicated to the interests of the Serious Motion Picture Maker.

**Vol. 9 March April, 1999  
No. 2**

MOVIE MAKERS is published bi-monthly on the 25th day of even-numbered months by the AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY and features news and articles of interest to the serious motion picture maker, video or film.

Membership price per year is \$7.00, Canada \$9.00, foreign addresses \$10.00, all payable in U.S. funds or equivalent. Articles may be copied when the source is given. Back copies are available at .80 cents post paid.

**George W. Cushman  
Founder,  
1909-1996**

Matt Jenkins, Editor

The AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY is not connected with any other organization, society, club or association. The Society does not offer dual, club, nor group memberships.

Address correspondence to the Society, 30 Kanan Rd. Oak Park, CA 91377-1105. E-mail: RGARRETSON1@JUNO.COM.

Officers of the Society: President, Ernest Smith, Salt Lake, Utah; vice President, open; Secretary/ Treasurer, Roger Garretson, Oak Park, California; Directors, Peter Crombie, Oak Lawn, Illinois, Jack Ruddell, Mississauga, Ontario.

### SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

CANADA, Margaret Chamberlain, 2701 Arbutus Rd, Victoria, BC V8N1W8.

UNITED KINGDOM, Terry Mendoza, P.O. Box 2009, Rochford, Essex SS4 1BF England

## From the Editor

**F**rustrated, that's what I am. I am beginning to shoot a documentary about a sculpture I am building. I sat down with a theater set designer to draw up a list of materials with which to build this masterpiece. Unfortunately, I can't seem to locate all the materials the designer recommended. And when I originally planned out the production, I thought that I would be ready to shoot by now. But it isn't shaping up that way. Also, I usually get apprehensive just prior to beginning production. All those "What if...?" questions arise. Sometimes it takes the mantra "This isn't brain surgery," to get me into the production stage. However, after the initial bumps are passed, and the worries subside, I remember why I keep on producing new projects, because I LOVE MAKING MOVIES!

In this issue, you will find the first of a series of articles on judging motion pictures. This series is a reprint of the articles which originally appeared in "Movie Makers" in the early 1990's. These articles, by George Cushman, are terrific and deserve a second look.

Does AMPS need a web page? I think so. Not only to attract new members, but we can use the page to serve as a beacon for amateur and low budget motion picture makers. We could have a question and answer section, our festival listing, and perhaps even a place where we can describe and distribute our "epics" to others. While I can't step forward and offer to create the web page, I am willing to ask my University to see if they are agreeable to providing space on our server with which to contain the page. If there is interest in having a web page, I will pursue a formal request. Of course, I would be agreeable to periodically

updating the page. Is there anyone out there willing to create the page for us?

Being part of the longest running film/video festival in the United States is impressive. My second suggestion is, lets make a documentary about AMPS and its members. Lets talk about our history and profile our members. While this is still just a vague idea that I am tossing out to the membership, I am interested in hearing from you on how we could produce it.

Also, could we produce a brochure to give out or send to prospective members? I just finished a four color tri-fold which our radio/television concentration will use to provide information to prospective students. It was easy to make, as I made it in Microsoft Publisher. While I am not pushing Microsoft publisher, there are lots of programs, even Corel Word Perfect can create brochures. Anybody out there interested?

Also, please renew your membership if it is up for renewal.

Matt Jenkins

*(President, Continued from page 1)*

speak for all, AMPS IS APPRECIATED. Each and everyone of you. Roger Garretson as Secretary/ Treasurer, Matt Jenkins as Editor, Pete Crombie in Illinois, and Jack Rudell in Ontario as board members, Margaret Chamberlain in Victoria as the Canadian representative, and Terry Mendoza in England as the United Kingdom representative. ALL ARE APPRECIATED. Yes, and perhaps even myself.

Thanks,

Ernest.

## When in Doubt, Leave It Out!

**I** hear this type of statement all the time: "Oh, if you use some one else's video clip, as long as its less than six seconds long, its considered fair use." Not in my book!

I am producing a documentary in which I want to quote statements that were published in various periodicals. I wrote to each publisher asking for permission. The responses ranged from: "You have a one time permission," to: "You must pay \$20.00 per quote and must ask permission in writing prior to each showing of the documentary."

The copyright was established to encourage creativity and to provide the artist with protection and control over the work. The same copyright laws that require me to seek permission to use someone else's work, protects my own work.

If you plan to use photographs, music, quotations from books or magazines, video or film clips, or anything that was produced by someone else, you better get formal permission from the copyright holder. Especially if there is even the slightest chance that your project will be seen by a large group of people, will receive an award in a festival, or be seen on television. This sounds like a lot of work, and sometimes it is a lot of work. In my experience, about 50 percent of the time, the copyright holder will grant you permission without any fees or strings attached. Be sure the copyright holder grants you permission **IN WRITING**. Other wise the permission is useless.

In reading festival entry forms, most

say that by signing the form you are stating that you have all clearances for your motion picture. This means you have written permission for all the stuff in your production that you didn't create.

Where else can you get music? Look in the back of such magazines as "Videomaker." There are lots of companies that sell buy out music. This means you pay a one time fee and then can use the music in any of your productions. Often you can call these companies and they will play examples over the telephone.

OR...when in doubt, leave it out!!

Matt Jenkins

## It's Only A Ball Game

No 1, July, 1991

**V**eteran movie makers, both video and film, will tell you that entering your work in a competition is like a ball game. You win a few, you lose a few. No one wins all the time, even with the same prize winning picture. Babe Ruth, the legendary Home Run King, struck out far more times than he homered the ball over the fence.

Beginners who enter competitions soon learn that winning in one festival is no guarantee that such "luck" will continue. And to a large degree winning consistently IS luck.

Festivals try to get competent judges but good judges are rare. Ideal judges are objective, but far too many of them allow their preferences, their likes, their dislikes to influence their judgement. Even though a picture may be well made,

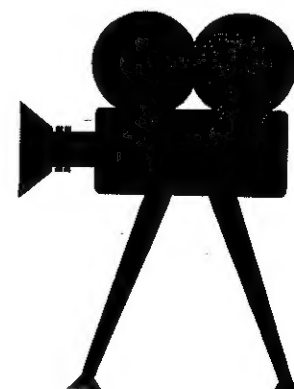
if the judge does not like the subject matter, he often finds it hard to cast his vote in favor.

Occasionally, a festival of amateur pictures will make the mistake of inviting professionals to serve on the judging panel. This is seldom wise because unless a judge was once an amateur himself and has had wide experience in the field of making pictures at the amateur level, it is very doubtful that he would be suitable for evaluating amateur work. A professional who never was an amateur seldom understands the amateur's problems and limitations and often has little or no sympathy for amateur efforts.

Pictures should be entered in a series of festivals and competitions to ascertain how well the work fares. If it wins consistently it has bucked the odds. But no picture, like a ball team, wins all the time the judges being what they are.

If the entrant will recognize and accept this, he will not become discouraged when told his picture did not win. Consistent losing means a poor picture and it should be re-worked, but the best picture ever made won't win every time. You win a few, you lose a few. That's the game we play.

George Cushman





# It Takes a Two-by-Four

**W**e are all familiar with the old story of the farmer, who before even picking up the reins, hit his mule across the head with a two-by-four, ostensibly to get his attention.

We, as movie makers, also should let our audience have a two-by-four between the horns (cinematically speaking, of course,) if our films are to rate more plaudits than yawns.

Specifically, I am referring to the way we choose to start our films. The opening sequence can make or break a film. The filmer can lose his audience with a weak opening sequence and be unable to recapture it even with excellent footage,

The movie maker should strive for an opening that will "grab" the audience, get their attention, and put them on the edge of the seat, anxious to see what is to follow.

There are several elements that can be used individually or in combination with each other, that will help achieve immediate audience response to a movie.

1. Surprise.
2. Color
3. Unusual Angle
4. Action.

The SURPRISE opening should be used judiciously. Care should be exercised that surprise is not used for its own sake. If it is not relevant to the story it will tend to confuse or annoy the viewer.

Striking COLORS and unusual SHAPES or combinations of both, tend to grab audience interest immediately.

Here again, they should be kept relevant to the story.

The unusual ANGLE or VIEW POINT open endless possibilities for attention grabbing opening scenes.

Experimenting while shooting can give a variety to choose from, come editing time. Of course ACTION is what movies are all about. Too many filmers, forget that "movies should move," and don't maintain their AQ (Action Quotient,) either in the opening or subsequent scenes. Consequently, the audience does not enjoy the film as much as they should.

So... filmers, as you gather footage for your next epic, look for the scene with the extra dramatic punch that can be used to belt your audience right between the eyes the instant the image hits the screen. Get off to a roaring start and the battle is half won.

But beware! The fact that you have a terrific beginning is no reason to relax your efforts on the rest of the film. It is disappointing to an audience fired up by a wild beginning and have the story drop after the opening salvo.

So movie makers, whether you use SURPRISE, COLOR, VIEWPOINT, or ACTION, as a grabber is not important, what is important is that you do remember the "two-by-four"... audiences are a lot like mules!

Stan Whitsitt

is reproduced from an "Art Appreciation Class" syllabus. It caught my attention as I thought how Elements of Art and Principles of Art depict the essence of what we attempt to apply and manipulate when we make a movie.

Is Movie Making an Art? It certainly is an art; and, the more expertly we apply the elements and follow the principles, the better and more significant will be our movies. The six elements depicted on page 6 are in a sense the elements that make up the visual image.

1. Lines of all shapes and sizes are recorded with fidelity or fuzziness according to recording quality.
2. Mass depends on how well the recorded image conveys the feeling of mass or size.
3. Light and dark deals with lighting and shadows.
4. Form (three dimensions) requires a consideration of perspective.
5. Texture is an important consideration as the recorded image often fails to depict faithfully certain textures. In fact the video image often distorts, or causes certain textures to flicker.
6. Color is not depicted on the following black and white page but it is certainly one of the most important elements in movie making. Faithful reproduction is difficult to achieve and it depends heavily on lighting, the recording system, and the skill of the cameraman. Even black and white or monotone movies can be skillfully filmed to give an impression of color.

Sound is not mentioned in this example of art as it deals with visual art. Sound and especially music is an art and is essential to a well made movie unless you still like the old silent movies. The six principles of art depicted on the following page are self explanatory. The aesthetic quality of our movies depends largely on how well we observe these principles. We need to follow these principles to make more appealing and significant movies.

Jim Beach

## WHAT IS ART?

**A**rt is defined in many ways. Webster's encyclopedic unabridged dictionary has eighteen ways of defining art.

I like this one - 1. The quality, production, or expression, according to aesthetic principles of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance.

The following page (bottom of page 6)

## Upcoming Festivals

Close Date	Festival Name & Address	Open to:	Subject	Formats	Time Limit	Entry Fee	Award	Show Dates
4-17-99	7th Croatian Minute Move Cup GRF FILM-VIDEO, 34000 Požega, Apl. Alagovića 6, p.p. CROATIA See note 1	A	G	HJ MN (PAL)	60 SECONDS	NONE	WUV	May 20-23
5-31-99	Mill Valley Film Festival % Film Institute of No. Calif. 38 Miller Av. Ste 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941	G	G	LM	NONE	\$20 (\$25 Int'l)	W	N/A
6-1-99	17th Annual Central Florida Film/Video Festival 1906 E. Robinson St, Orlando, FL 32803	ABCD F	G	HILMNO P	NONE	\$20 \$40	TUVK	Sep 25-Oct 3
7-16-99	20th Annual Denver Int'l Film Festival 1430 Larimer Sq., Suite 201, Denver CO 80202	ABCD E	G	MJK	No Limit	\$30 \$20 student	UV	Oct 7-14, 1999
6-15-99	CIAFF- Canadian Int'l Film/Video Festival, % Ben Andrews, 25 Eugenia St, Barrie, ON L4M 1P6 Canada	ABCD	G	G	30 min (Except film)	\$20 A \$40 D Y - others	UV	Contact CIAFF for dates in various cities
7-24-99	PSA Int'l Video Festival %Bill Buchanan FPSA 19186 Kingsville, Detroit, MI 48225-2142	AD	G	M (NTSC)	n/a	\$8 \$12 w/ret	UV	N/A
8-1-99	Louisville Film & Video Festival 2337 Frankfort Ave Louisville KY 40208-2467 Note: Films of interest to the gay/lesbian, minority & women's community are encouraged	ABCD E	G See Note	MNJ 35mm	NO LIMIT	\$35 Feature \$25 non feature	TV	11-3/7-99
8-15-99	70th Annual American International Film & Video Festival % Roger Garretson, 30 Kanan Rd., Oak Park, CA 91377-1105	ABCD	G	HJMNOP	30 Min	\$10 \$8 - AMPS MEMBER	UV	Oct 21-23 Salt Lake City, UT
N/A Not Announced or Not Available Please include a self addressed stamped envelope with your entry request								
A Non Commercial B College Student C Hi Sch Gr Sch	D Independent E Commercial F Restricted	G Open H S8 J 16mm	K Other L 3/4" M VHS	N SVHS O 8mm P Hi8	Q Invitatat'l R Regional S Exceptions	T Cash U Trophies V Certificate	W Other Award X Approximate Y It Varies	

Note 1: Contact Roger Garretson (818) 706-8136 for information.

## WHAT IS ART?

Function of Art  
expression • representation • decoration • order

## Elements of Art

## Principles of Art

## 1. Line



## 2. Mass



## 5. Texture



## 6. Color

## 3. Light and Dark



## 4. Form (three dimensions)



## 1. Fit the Format



## 2. Unity



## 3. Rhythm

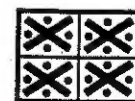


static



dynamic

## 4. Balance

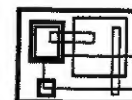


symmetrical



asymmetrical

## 5. Variation



## 6. Harmony

# WANTED

**You!**

**AT THE TEN BEST OF THE WEST-  
AMPS CONVENTION**

**OCTOBER 21-24, 1999**

**SALT LAKE CITY**

**HOSTED BY THE**

**UTAH AMATEUR VIDEO MAKERS**

**Featuring:**

**Anything goes (show-off time for noncontestants)**

**AMPS Festival winners**

**Family History Presentation**

**Make a Movie at the Convention**

**Clay-mation Demonstration**

**Creative Script Writing (Surprize Guest Advisor)**

**Presentation of Movie made at the Convention**

**Dinner and Entertainment at the SLC Jail!**

**and the Banquet Celebration**

**A Movie Fest in the  
Wild, Wild West!**



78th  
CONSECUTIVE  
YEAR

**1999**  
**AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL**  
**FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**

**FINAL**  
**DAY OF JUDGING**  
**AUG 15, 1999**

A separate form is required for each entry. *Please print*

Name (to be used on any award) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State/Prov, \_\_\_\_\_

Title of your production \_\_\_\_\_

Running Time \_\_\_\_\_ Amateur \_\_\_\_\_ Independant \_\_\_\_\_

Type: Documentary \_\_\_\_\_ Nature \_\_\_\_\_ Scenario \_\_\_\_\_  
Animation \_\_\_\_\_ Fiction \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL VIDEO MUST BE IN NTSC ONLY**

VIDEO VHS \_\_\_\_\_ SVHS \_\_\_\_\_ Hi8 \_\_\_\_\_

FILM 8mm \_\_\_\_\_ S-8 \_\_\_\_\_ 16mm \_\_\_\_\_

SOUND Optical \_\_\_\_\_ Magnetic \_\_\_\_\_ Tape \_\_\_\_\_

Return the judges comments? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Festival Rules and Regulations on the back of this form and I agree to abide by them. I hereby affirm that all information I am submitting is true and correct. I understand that I am to pay return postage charges and I enclose sufficient funds for that purpose.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

From: R. A. McCartney  
1120 La Mirada Ave  
Escondido, CA 92026 USA

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CONTENTS: VIDEO TAPE OR SAFETY FILM  
FROM EXHIBITION BEING RETURNED TO  
SENDER. NO COMMERCIAL VALUE.

**ENTRY FEE PER ENTRY**

NON MEMBER \$ 10.00

AMPS MEMBER 8.00

RETURN POSTAGE \_\_\_\_\_

INSURANCE \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP \* \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment must be made in U.S. funds. Checks bank drafts,  
or money orders must be cashable at U.S. banks. Make  
payable to:

American International Film/Video Festival or AIF/VF.

\* The optional AMPS membership includes the "Movie  
Maker, a bimonthly newsletter.

U.S.A. \$7.00 Canada \$9.00 Foreign \$10.00

**Entries without return postage will be placed in the AMPS  
library.**

Special instructions \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To:  
R. A. McCartney  
1120 La Mirada Ave  
Escondido, CA 92026  
USA

CONTENTS: VIDEO TAPE OR SAFETY FILM  
FROM EXHIBITION BEING RETURNED TO  
SENDER. NO COMMERCIAL VALUE.

**1999**  
**AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**

**DEFINITION OF CLASSIFICATION**

**Amateur**-is composed of productions made solely for fun and pleasure with no profit motive in mind, have not been financed nor funded by an outside source, and have not been a subject of any sales or rental agreement prior to entry in the Festival and have not been made as part of a college course leading to a degree. No one working on any of the creative aspects of the production may receive pay for their services. Entries may be made by more than one person such as a club, providing the non profit condition remains.

**Independent**-is composed of productions that comply with Amateur, except have been financed or funded by an outside source and/or have been produced as a part of a college course leading to a degree.

**ENTRY RULES AND REGULATIONS**

1. The festival is open to all motion picture makers anyplace. Previous entries may not be reentered.
2. Entries may be: Film (Regular 8, Super 8, or 16mm) All video entries must be in NTSC format.
3. Entries may be on any subject.
4. Entries may be up to 30 minutes long
5. Trailers indicating previous awards must be removed.
6. Copyright clearances, when necessary, must accompany entries.
7. Only one entry on a video cassette is allowed.
8. Entries which the Festival Committee considers risque or pornographic in nature will be judged but will not be screened at the Festival.
9. Use a separate entry form for each entry. This form may be photo-copied or duplicated by any process.
10. This form must be enclosed with the contest entry.

**ENTRY INFORMATION**

1. Receipt of all entries will be acknowledged promptly.
2. While extreme care will be given all entries, neither the Festival nor its sponsors can be responsible for damage or loss.
3. A list of the winning entries and their makers will be sent to each contestant.
4. The judges sheets will be sent upon request and enclosed with the return of your film/video when so indicated on the reverse side of this form.
5. Entries will be judged prior to, and on the closing date for each class of entry. Entries not held for screening at the Festival will be returned promptly, and the winners as soon as the Festival screening have ended.
6. Entries must be shipped postpaid with return

postage inclosed. If return postage is not enclosed the entry will be added to the Society's library.

7. Submission of an entry denotes acceptance of all Festival rules and regulations as printed here.
8. Unless the maker objects, this Festival may make a duplicate copy of certain winning movies at it's own expense for non profit showing to amateur groups but the copyright remains the property of the movie maker.

**FOREIGN ENTRY SHIPMENTS**

1. WILL NOT ACCEPT ENTRIES SHIPPED BY AIR EXPRESS OR AIR FREIGHT. The expense and red tape on this end are too expensive and too involved.
2. Foreign entries should be sent by air parcel post.
3. Ask your local post office what information they require from you for mailing your entry to our Festival. Regulations vary within each country.
4. You might also ask your post office of any special requirements for return of your entry.

**THE FINAL DAY OF JUDGING IS**

**August 15, 1999**

**All entries must be received prior to that date.**

**PRIZES AND AWARDS**

First Place	Plaque
Second Place	Plaque
Third Place	Plaque
Certificates for Top Ten entries	

**SPONSORED AWARDS**

**(Amateur Only)**

**CATAGORY SPONSOR**

Best Editing	Erma & Jack Ruddell
Best Story Picture	Skip & Irene Haag
Most Creative Entry	Rose Dabbs

**OTHER AWARDS FOR.....**

Best Cinematography	Best Experimental
Best Club Production	Best Foreign Entry
Best Documentary	Best Nature Entry